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ABSTRACT

A course curriculum was developed by the faculty of Mount St. Joseph College in order to facilitate an interdisciplinary approach to education. It evolved from a recognition of the need for synthesization of knowledge gained by students from study in many areas. The program was undertaken in the fall of 1971 and has developed so that courses, institutes, workshops, and entire major programs have been initiated on an interdisciplinary plan. Results have been limited to favorable student/teacher comment. (Author/JB)

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EXCELLENCE IN TEACHER EDUCATION ENTRY

COLLEGE OF MOUNT ST. JOSEPH

INTER-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO TEACHER PREPARATION

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EXCELLENCE IN TEACHER EDUCATION ENTRY

COLLEGE OF MOUNT ST. JOSEPH

INTER-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO TEACHER PREPARATION

SUMMARY

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHER EDUCATION ENTRY
COLLEGE OF MOUNT ST. JOSEPH

INTER-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO TEACHER PREPARATION

SUMMARY

The faculty of Mount St. Joseph recognized the need for eliminating fragmentation of the educational process. They began seeking ways to enable students to achieve a synthesiztion of their areas of study.

The graduation requirements of the college were studied and revised to allow more elective selections and to increase course time allotments. One primary objective of this action was to increase the possibility of inter-disciplinary courses.

The education department faculty investigated the implications for the preparation of teachers. A need was expressed for future professionals in related fields to become acquainted with the roles of others and to begin communicating at the undergraduate level. Consequently, seminars were planned in which future nurses, dietitions, and area specialists participated together.

Another outcome was the development of methods courses taught by teams which include education department faculty as well as faculty from other departments. An example of this is the course "Discovery Approach to Science" in which the biology department chairman brings scientific expertise and members of the education department contribute in areas of pedagogy. These courses are open to education majors in the specific field being covered.

Since it is vital that future teachers have a balance between professional and general education courses, it was deemed necessary for plans to be formulated to increase the availability of inter-disciplinary courses in the liberal arts areas. Consequently, faculty teams were formed to plan and implement programs which cross disciplinary lines. An example of this is the course in "Eco-ethics" taught by faculty members from the sociology, theology, and science departments.

The concept of inter-disciplinary courses has the whole-hearted support of administration, faculty, and students. Therefore, more courses and programs of this nature are being developed each semester and more students are seeking to include some of these courses in their total programs.

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CASE STUDY

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CASE STUDY

The faculty of the College of Mt. St. Joseph met frequently over a period of two years seeking to construct a valid, imaginative, and totally educational curricular synthesis. Attention was directed generally to basic principles of education, and precisely to the liberal arts courses. The guiding principles underlying proposed change were:

1. The liberal studies required by this college should not be merely of academic disciplines; rather they should concern the functioning components of our society as these affect the lives and well being of all. Thus relevance on various levels became a major criterion of course and program construction.
2. Within this context, the mind and work of the past assumes a great importance. The humane scholar has the special obligation and privilege of interpreting the past to each new generation of men.
3. The present by implication is of paramount importance. Our curriculum is an incisive analysis of past and present, leading the student toward a confident position in the world.
4. The liberal arts curriculum also looks to the future, because past and present decisions determine future movement. Thus the student will hopefully realize that her dynamic efforts can change future society.

5. Artificial departmental limits ought not be maintained when content suggests otherwise. Therefore inter-departmental, team-taught courses are proposed wherever such technique seems helpful.

From this basis the course curriculum was adopted as a vehicle for developing inter-disciplinary courses and programs. The course curriculum is an academic degree program defined by a total of successfully completed courses, proportioned into liberal education, a major or concentration, and electives. The number of courses per semester is limited to 4-5 for credit.

The rationale of the course system includes the following:

1. A course curriculum deepens the student's academic experience by allowing her to pursue fewer areas in depth rather than scatter her energies over six or seven subjects and feel fragmented or disconnected.
2. Because many of the liberal education courses must rely on interdepartmental cooperation (in divisional rather than departmental offerings) it leads the student to synthesize her knowledge experience more readily.
3. It tends to eliminate academic matter of a less relevant nature; at the same time it allows the student more time to follow specific interests stimulated by the course content.

During the initial planning, course design, and implementation stages, the faculty desired a way to provide each student with opportunity to attain broad intellectual formation through experience in the different ways of knowing provided by the liberal arts, to develop expertise in a particular area of knowledge, and to construct an academic program designed according to individual needs and interests which builds upon the student's previous academic experience.

Accordingly the faculty of the College has provided that each student should take approximately one-third of the coursework in the liberal arts distributed proportionately among these four divisions:

1. Theology-Philosophy -- because they provide insight into man's search for meaning and the reason for his existence.
2. Humanities -- because they enhance our understanding of human experience and our appreciation of the forms of aesthetic expression.
2. History-Social Sciences -- because they provide a perspective on the development of the human person, society, and culture.
4. Natural Sciences-Mathematics -- because their methods contribute to our knowledge of the world around us and are of great significance in contemporary culture.

Within this framework, the student and the faculty adviser determine the courses which will lay the foundation for a liberal education. The completion of this coursework is the beginning or foundation of a liberal education to be further developed both within the major field and by the thoughtful choice of electives.

As a result of concentrated efforts of all departments working together, the present college curriculum now contains many courses of an inter-disciplinary nature. The following course descriptions are selected examples of the inter-disciplinary approach as applied to teacher preparation.

Course: Techniques of Discovery

Instructors: Mr. Schutzius -- English Department

Sr. Martha Glockner -- Philosophy

Course Description:

The course includes the study of formal logic, i.e., processes of inference, induction, and fallacies; and the study of discovery

techniques useful for subjects and problems which involve human agencies and contingencies and which are therefore not capable of being completely dealt with by the procedures of formal logic. Such discovery techniques are known as heuristic models, i.e., a series of questions or prescribed intellectual procedures which produce provisional answers or provisional lines of development. The effect of a heuristic is to cause one to focus on a subject or problem multi-dimensionally. This increases ones understanding both of the subject or problem at hand and of the way others might see the same subject or problem. Hence, heuristic procedures are useful both for generating information and provisional approaches and for analyzing a potential audiences position of a given issue.

Course: Change through Visual Media

Instructors; Mr. Gutting -- Theater Department

Mr. Schutzius -- English Department

Course Description:

A practical workshop in the production and use of 16 mm film and video-tape. Utilizing cameras, video-tape recorders, microphones, and monitors; participants have the opportunity to learn skills needed to produce a one-half inch video tape or sixte n mm. film from original conception to presentation, including research, shooting, editing, playback, and feedback. Lectures and demonstrations will preceed organization into production groups. Guest experts in selected production areas are invited for classroom discussion of the actual production problems of students.

Course: The Discovery Approach in Science

Instructors: Sr. Paula -- Biology Department

Mrs. Lane -- Education Department

Miss Waggoner -- Education Department

Course Description:

In answer to the request of several junior elementary education majors a new half-course geared to assisting elementary education and secondary science majors in learning how to present science effectively. It consists of selected science topics presented using a process approach.

Course: Student Teaching Seminar

Instructors: Education Department Members

Guest Lecturers

Course Description:

This course is mainly topics related to nursing and teaching. The students are majors of professional fields. The subject titles and lecturers are listed below:

Title: Non-graded and Open School

Guest Lecturer: Sr. Marilyn Joseph and Sr. Cecilia

Title: Evaluation as a part of the Teaching-Learing Process

Guest Lecturer: Part I Sr. Barbara Geoghegan

Title: Evaluation Part II Sr. Barbara Geoghegan

Title: The Administrator and the Beginning Teacher

Guest Lecturer: Mr. William Loughery

Title: Hamilton County Diagnostic Staff -- Part I

Title: Hamilton County Diagnostic Staff -- Part II

Title: Placement Services

Guest Lecturer: Sr. Angela Mary -- Director of Placement Office,

Title: The Teacher and Multi-Media

Guest Lecturer: Mr. Roger Fransecky -- Director of the Multi-Media Center, U.of C.

Title: Pupil Personnel Services

Guest Lecturer: Mr. Donald T. Hester -- Director P-P Services
Northwest School District

Title: Job Interview

Guest Lecturer: Mr. Forest Orebaugh -- Personnel Director,
Cincinnati Public Schools

Enclosed with this report are brochures of two institutes which have an inter-disciplinary format using guest lecturers. They are the Ecumenical Institute on Religious Education and Futurology Institute.

The Education department expects that our student-teachers will realize these objectives.

1. To prepare a basically well-educated individual who is able to synthesize all components of her liberal arts education with her professional preparation.
2. To help to develop prospective teachers who have the conceptual background to call upon when solving problems relating to their role as professional educators with other professionals in society.
3. To prepare the professionally competent individual who is aware of her role as a teacher and also aware of the inter-relationship of her role to other professionals
4. To prepare a professionally competent prospective teacher who has developed the competence necessary for working with and relating to differentiated personnel in the school system.

5. To assist prospective teachers in experiencing at the college level team-teaching as one channel for redefining their teaching role in the school system.

The personnel involved in this program included faculty from all divisions of the college program. In addition to this selected guest lecturers were utilized. Specific examples of these personnel are found in the program description.

One of the advantages of this program was that the inter-disciplinary courses were developed by the cooperating departments and, therefore, did not require additional money. Each department shared the financial burden of development and implementation of the inter-disciplinary approach to teacher education.

Evaluation and feed-back to date has been limited to statements from Cooperating School personnel and student teachers. The Cooperating Teacher's evaluation of the student teacher has frequently included statements attesting to the individuals command of her own subject matter and an understanding of fields other than her own. Our secondary teachers are frequently employed by schools because they have this inter-disciplinary background. These schools find this background very useful in developing humanistic curriculums. It is the intention of the Education Department to document this program further by the use of an adapted Allport-Vernon-Lindsey Scale of Values and the Purdue Student-Teacher Opinionaire. In addition plans are being made with the Personnel Director of one school system to implement further evaluation of our graduates employed by that district.

The inter-disciplinary approach to education contributes to the improvement of teacher education because it provides a program that will direct the prospective teacher into a course of preparation that enables her to develop certain competencies. These include the awareness of the various roles she must assume in a present and future oriented school system, the ability towork effectively with a wide range of human individuals, and the background to operate as a classroom resource person.

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